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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER 20, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for December 20, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

CUMHURIYET / HURRIYET / YENI SAFAK / RADIKAL: Cemil Cicek, spokesperson of the AK Party government, strongly opposed and criticized the recent remarks of Joost Lagendijk, EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Commission Chairperson, advising the Kurds to move closer to the Turkish GOT, with whom a dialogue can be established (instead of leaning towards the PKK which resorted to armed conflict): a situation which reportedly strengthened and benefited the position of the Turkish military forces. This line of thought, according to Cicek, amounted to classifying Turkey's military forces as in the same ranks with the terrorist organization PKK.

CUMHURIYET: A radar project carried out in Hatay, whose ownership is declared as belonging to NATO and whose installation has been undertaken by the U.S., allegedly will be used by the U.S., not by NATO, to watch the activities of Syria.

RADIKAL / HURRIYET / YENI SAFAK: During a meeting with the Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul, NATO General Secretary Jaap De Hoop said that there was no doubt about the terrorist character of the PKK either in his own mind or the minds of the NATO allies.

YENI SAFAK: The European Council warned Denmark, a country that has been reluctant to take measures against the pro-PKK Roj TV.

RADIKAL / YENI SAFAK / OZGUR GUNDEM: Diyarbakir Prosecutor discontinued actions against statements by Diyarbakir Mayor Osman Baydemir, made during his speech in Belgium and Strasbourg.

HURRIYET: Seventeen year old M.T., who killed his sister in Diyarbakir's Baglar quarter on January 2003, was initially sentenced to 12 years in prison. M.T.'s prison sentence was reduced to six years and eight months following the court's considerations of his good conduct and his young age. After serving 3 years in prison, the court decided that M.T. be released.

CUMHURIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM: Despite the Forensic Medicine Authority's determination that the nine bullets found in the body of 12-year-old Ugur Kaymaz were fatal and Ugur Kaymaz could not engage in an armed clash, the Ozgur Gundem newspaper pointed out that the courts dismissed the litigant's request to arrest the defendants. The daily drew attention to the heavy police presence at the courthouse in Eskisehir before the trial of Kaymaz's case, sharply contrasting it with the weak police presence during Orhan Pamuk's court hearing in Istanbul.

YENI SAFAK / OZGUR GUNDEM: Hakan Acil (27) is a police officer whom the PKK kidnapped two months ago (see press summary 10/11 and 12/09) on a road between Sirnak and Mardin. Acil's father waited outside the court hall in Eskisehir where the Kaymaz case was being heard, to talk with the members of the Human Rights Association about the release of his son.

CUMHURIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM: Nationwide protests, including in Istanbul, Ankara, Diyarbakir, Van, Hakkari, Mus, Hatay, and Binol provinces, were held against the December 2000 "Return to Life Operation" launched against inmates on hunger strike in various jails in Turkey (see press summary 12/19).

OZGUR GUNDEM: The court prosecuting 13 officers in Mardin on charges of killing one and wounding four persons from the Demir family during an October 2003 raid conducted on a village in Mardin's Derik district, has reportedly been moved to the Adana province. The reason for moving the place of the lawsuit was given as "preserving public security." A prior notification about this change of place reportedly was not sent to the litigants and their attorneys.

OZGUR GUNDEM: German-based SU TV started its test broadcasts. SU TV's audience profile will be the (Turkish) Alawi community; however, the channel aims at making the voices of millions, who cannot find the means to express themselves, heard.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Mehmet Eraslan, Hatay deputy from DYP (True Path Party), submitted a proposal demanding a probe into books, which have been circulating for free among primary school children. Reportedly, these books included pictures of crosses and churches, and quoted excerpts from Christian prayers.

YENI SAFAK / RADIKAL / HURRIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM: Erdal Akpınar, a brigadier general, who reportedly held a meeting two weeks ago with non-governmental organizations at the Yuksekova Brigade Command (see press summary 12/13) and warned people about the yellow-red-green colored flags carried by the people during demonstrations, reportedly filed a complaint against a primary school headmaster and the trainer of a folk dance group about the clothing of children, who performed folk dances during the October 29 Republic Day ceremonies, on grounds that these clothes resembled the clothing style of PKK militants.

OZGUR GUNDEM: BEKSAV (Science Education Aesthetics Culture and Arts Foudnation) will hold a panel on "Putting the Semdinli Case on the Agenda of the Metropolises with the Correct Approach" on January 24 in Istanbul. Esat Canan, Hakkari deputy from CHP (Republican People's Party); Seferi Yilmaz, the owner of the bombed bookstore in Semdinli; Mikail Aslan, the person wounded during the bombing will also participate in the event.
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